

Protest follows U.S. Army pick on massive training contract

The U.S. Army's move to select a Raytheon-led team to consolidate all live, virtual and constructive training efforts for the service over the next 10 years is on hold because of a protest by the industry team that was passed over for the award.

The Army's Program Executive Office for Simulation, Training & Instrumentation (PEO STRI), which manages much of the service's training systems, announced June 5 that it had selected the Warrior Training Alliance for the Warfighter Field Operations Cus-

tomor Support (FOCUS) contract, which is slated to commence Nov. 1. But General Dynamics Information Technology, which led the rival Warfighter FOCUS Alliance team, filed a protest June 13 with the Government Accountability Office (GAO).

A GAO decision on whether to uphold the source selection or recompet the award is expected by autumn. A statement from PEO STRI, which declined a request for interview until after the protest is decided, said the service expects the GAO to resolve the protest by

Sept. 30, the end of fiscal 2007.

With a total value that could reach \$11.2 billion over the next 10 years, Warfighter FOCUS is one of the largest — if not the largest — single training contract to emanate from the Defense Department. Under the award, a trio of existing contracts for conducting Army live, virtual and constructive (LVC) training — held by Raytheon for live, Computer Sciences Corp. for virtual and General Dynamics for constructive — will expire Oct. 31 and be replaced by a single contract that would oversee all LVC training operations and support systems worldwide. The Army believes that approach will streamline operations at installations and lead to quicker technology advancements in modeling and simulation, as well as tens of millions of dollars in annual savings.

After the award was announced, PEO STRI program manager for field operations, Russ McBride, said Warfighter FOCUS would result in savings of about \$568 million through 2017. "Army leadership will determine how best to apply the savings in support of the soldier," he said in a statement.

Raytheon Technical Services, a division of Raytheon Co., heads the Warrior Training Alliance along with collaborator Computer Sciences Corp. and 64 other companies, 43 of which are small businesses clamoring for a share of a huge pie. Team leader General Dynamics Information Technology joined with Lockheed Martin, Northrop Grumman, Saab and 10 small businesses to form the rival Warfighter FOCUS Alliance.

Raytheon, which was readying interviews with program officials after the award was announced, declined to speak further after the June 13 protest filing. A written statement provided by Jon Kastle, director of medial relations at the company, said, "Raytheon Company believes the Warfighter FOCUS selection process was unbiased

and that Raytheon was scored fairly. We have the right offering for the U.S. Army. We look forward to a speedy resolution so that we can continue focusing on what is most important — soldier readiness."

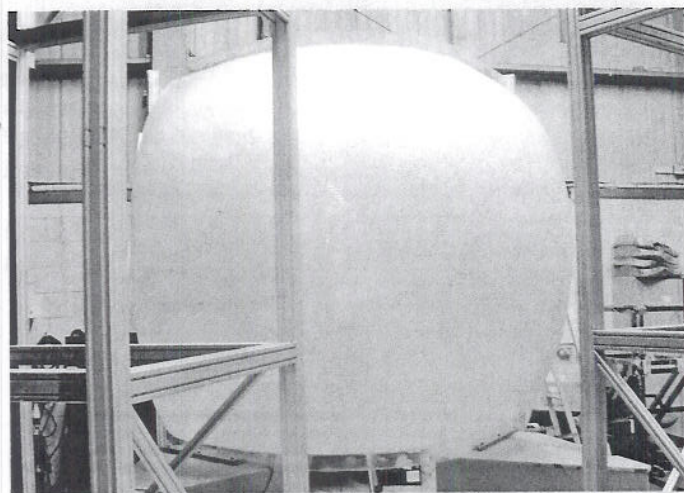
General Dynamics spokesman Rob Doolittle declined comment, citing the legal dispute, and PEO STRI spokeswoman Kristen Dooley provided a written statement that acknowledged the protest and said: "The government is confident in the decision to award Warfighter FOCUS to Raytheon Technical Services Company. We look forward to a successful resolution of this protest and providing continued support to the Warfighter."

A phase-in period was to begin June 6 until the full contract starts in November, but it remains unclear how that will transpire given the protest. Richard Yuse, president of Raytheon Technical Services, said the company's team "is already in place at 93 percent of the Army's training sites." More than 3,400 contractors at present are working at about 150 manned sites and 458 unmanned sites worldwide that contain Army training devices.

The major changes that would result from the new contract seem to fall in the constructive training domain, currently overseen by General Dynamics. Partners Raytheon and Computer Sciences Corp. already hold the live and virtual domain contracts, respectively, and Mike Edwards, program manager for the Warrior Training Alliance, said in a press briefing June 5 that it is possible that some General Dynamics employees at affected installations may be integrated into the new team once the contract kicks in.

Under Warfighter FOCUS, contractor support will encompass training exercises and operations across all three domains, maintenance support for the training and range systems such as at Fort Hood, Texas, according to Edwards, and engineering support for life-cycle support of training devices and range systems. The work also entails management and overseeing administrative support for all contractors in the winning consortium, and supply support for all government-owned property.

— Jack Weible



LOCKHEED MARTIN

First glimpse of JSF dome

This photo of the F-35 Joint Strike Fighter full mission simulator dome was shown at the IMAGE 2007 conference in Scottsdale, Ariz., in July, giving a first public look at the 360-degree acrylic-based structure under construction at SEOS' factory in the U.K.

Randall Wallace, Lockheed Martin JSF training device imagery and display lead, said the 2-meter-radius dome's "squashed" shape shaves 12.4 inches off the

dome's height. This unique display shape makes it compatible with head-mounted display use, a critical JSF technology, while also keeping down the simulator's footprint size. The full mission simulator will have 25 projectors and 25 image generator systems.

First deliveries to Lockheed Martin will take place by year-end. SEOS is making the display dome and projectors; Rockwell Collins is providing the image generator system.